

SENATE BILL 554
By Clabough

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 8; Title 50
and Title 68, Chapter 102, relative to rights of volunteer
emergency personnel.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 50, is amended by adding the following
as a new, appropriately designated section:

50-__-__.

(a) No employer shall terminate an employee who is a volunteer
firefighter because such employee, when acting as a volunteer firefighter, is
absent or late to the employee's employment in order to respond to an
emergency prior to the time the employee is to report to his or her place of
employment.

(b) An employer may charge any time that an employee, who is a
volunteer firefighter, loses from employment because of such employee's
response to an emergency against the employee's regular pay.

(c) An employer has the right to request an employee, who loses time
from the employee's employment to respond to an emergency, to provide the

employer with a written statement from the supervisor or acting supervisor of the volunteer fire department stating that the employee responded to an emergency and list the time and date of the emergency.

(d) Any employee that is terminated in violation of the provisions of this section may bring a civil action against such employee's employer. The employee may seek reinstatement to the employee's former position, payment of back wages, reinstatement of fringe benefits, and where seniority rights are granted, the reinstatement of seniority rights. The employee has one (1) year from the date of violation of this section to file an action.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2003, the public welfare requiring it.